

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 COME-00 PM-05 NSF-01
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EPA-01 SSO-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 13425

DEPT PASS EPA FOR SHOSTAL

DEPT PASS NOAA FOR MARTINEAU

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TOCY, SENV, PLOS, UR, US
SUBJECT: R/V "WESTERN VIKING" REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE
IN SOVIET ZONE

REF: (A) STATE 146742, (B) STATE 129996, (C) STATE
104460, (D) MOSCOW 4609

1. EMBASSY HAS PRESSED MFA SEVERAL TIMES FOR AN
ANSWER TO OUR REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE FOR R/V "WESTERN
VIKING" TO CONDUCT BOWHEAD WHALE RESEARCH IN
SOVIET ZONE. WE AGAIN CONTACTED MFA ON JUNE 12,
AFTER RECEIPT OF REF A. MFA REP RESPONDED THAT
THE MATTER IS BEING CONSIDERED BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES.
EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT CRUISE IS SCHEDULED TO
BEGIN JUNE 15 AND MFA REP INDICATED THAT WE WOULD
RECEIVE A REPLY BY JUNE 15. EMBOFF ALSO INFORMED
MFA REP THAT RESEARCH WOULD CONSIST OF OBSERVING
AND PHOTOGRAPHING MARINE MAMMALS (PER REF A).
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MFA REP HAD NO COMMENT ON THIS INFORMATION.

2. WITH RESPECT TO QUESTION IN PARA 1 OF REF A,
CONCERNING SOVIET PERCEPTION OF EXTENT OF
THEIR JURISDICTION, WHEN EMBOFF PRESENTED THE ORIGINAL
REQUEST FOR "WESTERN VIKING" CLEARANCE, MFA REP
NOTED THAT THE RESEARCH INVOLVED A SURVEY OF BOWHEAD

WHALES AND IT THEREFORE APPEARED TO FALL INTO THE CATEGORY OF MARINE LIVING RESOURCES RESEARCH, FOR WHICH PRIOR PERMISSION IS REQUIRED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SOVIET LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING A 200 MILE ZONE.

3. EMBASSY RECEIVED MAP OF PROPOSED RESEARCH BY "WESTERN VIKING" ON JUNE 9 AND PASSED IT ON TO MFA SAME DAY. WE NOTE THAT THE CAPTION OF THE MAP INDICATED THAT THE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED UP TO THREE MILES FROM SOVIET COAST. ORIGINAL INFORMATION WE RECEIVED IN REF B INDICATED THAT RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED WITHIN TWO MILES FROM SOVIET COAST. PLEASE ADVISE.

4. COMMENT. WE BELIEVE THERE IS A STRONG CHANCE THAT SOVIETS WILL TURN DOWN US REQUEST. IF THEY DO, IT WILL BE THE SECOND OCCASION IN PAST TWO MONTHS THAT SOVIETS HAVE DENIED US PERMISSION TO CONDUCT BOWHEAD WHALE RELATED RESEARCH WITHIN THE SOVIET TWO HUNDRED MILE ZONE. (SOVIETS DID NOT PERMIT AERIAL SURVEY OF BOWHEAD WHALES REQUESTED IN REF C.) IN ADDITION TO ITS CONNECTION WITH INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES, WE NOTE THAT BOTH THESE REQUESTS ARE CONNECTED WITH "MARINE MAMMALS" PROJECT OF US-USSR ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT. WE FURTHER NOTE THAT REF D

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TRANSMITS A SOVIET REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE "MARINE MAMMALS" WORKING GROUP, WHICH INVOLVES SHOOTING THE FOLLOWING QUANTITIES OF MAMMALS WITHIN THE US TWO HUNDRED MILE ZONE: WALRUSES - 200, RIBBON SEAL - 100, HARBOR SEALS - 200, RING SEALS - 350, AND BEARDED SEALS - 100. SHOULD SOVIETS ACTUALLY DENY THE "WESTERN VIKING" RESEARCH -- WHICH ONLY INVOLVES PHOTOGRAPHING BOWHEAD WHALES -- THE RESULTING IMBALANCE WILL BE OBVIOUS. WHILE WE WOULD NOT WISH TO PREJUDICE THE US STANCE ON MSR AT THE LOS CONFERENCE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SHOOTING HUNDREDS OF MARINE MAMMALS WITHIN THE US ZONE COULD BE CONSIDERED TO IMPINGE ON LOS QUESTION. IN VIEW OF SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO PERMIT EVEN THE MOST INNOCUOUS MARINE RESEARCH WITHIN THEIR ZONE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT, SHOULD THE SOVIETS DENY REQUESTED "WESTERN VIKING" RESEARCH REQUEST THE US DENY REF D REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN US WATERS AND TO SHOOT THE INDICATED QUANTITIES OF MARINE MAMMALS. TOON

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Message Attributes

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